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TESTIMONY OF CELESTE POULIN, DIRECTOR  
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION, AND FORESTRY

IN FAVOR OF LD 2128

"Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 348: On Farm Raising, Slaughter and Processing of Less Than 1,000 Ready-to-Cook Whole Poultry Carcasses"  
Sen. Dill, Rep. Hickman, and members of the Committee, I am Celeste Poulin and I am Director of the Division of Quality Assurance and Regulations in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

I am here today to speak in support of this bill and the regulations in Chapter 348: On Farm Raising, Slaughter and Processing of Less than 1,000 Ready-To-Cook Whole Poultry Carcasses".

The federal Code of Regulations authorizes several exemptions for small scale poultry operations from the Poultry Products Inspection Act, including a 1000K poultry or less exemption. The federal regulation allows the following:

"The slaughtering of sound and healthy poultry and processing of poultry products by any poultry producer on his own premises with respect to poultry raised on his premises, and the distribution by any person solely within such jurisdiction of the poultry of the poultry products derived from such operations: Provided, that (i) in lieu of complying with all the adulteration provisions of the Act, such poultry is slaughtered and otherwise processed and handled under such sanitary standards, practices, and procedures as result in the preparation of poultry products that are sound, clean, and fit for human food when so distributed." [9 CFR 381.10(a)(5)]

In response, the Maine Legislature added an exemption to the Maine Revised Statutes to allow on farm slaughter and processing of less than 1000 birds annually (22 MRS 2517-C.1) in 2015. In addition to authorizing the 1000K or less poultry exemption, these new statutes also stated that:

"The Commissioner shall adopt rules to establish requirements for the physical facilities and sanitary processes used by poultry producers whose products are exempt from inspection under this action."

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The proposed Chapter 348 before you today are those rules. They have been carefully crafted to elucidate the minimum standards that must be met by producers to maintain sanitary standards and ensure a safe product, while also offering best practices for those producers who wish to produce the best product possible. They cover such important topics areas as poultry health, humane handling, and storage temperature requirements, plus minimum standards regarding clean and sanitary facilities. We did notice during our review of the legislative markup copy of the rules and the rules that were submitted that two bullet points in the safe handling graphic were inadvertently left off the legislative markup version of the rules. We respectfully request that the legislative markup version be amended to include the two missing bullet points, which concern safety information that must be printed on labels. Thank you for your time, and I will be happy to answer questions now or in the work session.